

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 03189 221131Z

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CPR-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 IGA-02 SWF-02 EB-11

COME-00 TRSE-00 IO-14 FEA-02 EUR-25 SAM-01 DRC-01

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R 220847Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8138

INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMCONSUL ASMARA

CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 3189

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, EAID, OVIP, ET, US

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER REGARDING

FOREIGN MINISTER'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO

WASHINGTON AND OTHER MATTERS

REF: ADDIS 1859

1. SUMMARY: PRIMIN LIJ ENDALKACHEW MAKONNEN HAS EXPRESSED WISH THAT HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC EXPERTS HEADED BY FONMIN DR. MINASSIE VISIT WASHINGTON SOON IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A "NEW BASIS" FOR US-ETHIOPIAN COOPERATION AND TO DISCUSS US ASSISTANCE. PRINCIPAL ISSUE I RAISED IN THIS CONVERSATION WAS THAT OF CRUCIAL PROBLEM FOR DROUGHT RELIEF POSED BY PORT CONGESTION, TO WHICH PM PROMISED GIVE PERSONAL ATTENTION.

2. I PAID BRIEF COURTESY CALL ON NEW PRIME MINISTER

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ADDIS 03189 221131Z

AFTERNOON MARCH 21, DURING COURSE OF WHICH HE COMMENTED

THAT ONLY THAT DAY HAD HE HAD TIME TO RECEIVE REPRESENTATIVES OF PERMANENT MEMBERS OF SECURITY COUNCIL. HE SHOWED NO SIGNS OF STRAIN AND GAVE SAME IMPRESSION OF COMPETENCE AND COMPOSURE THAT HE HAD DISPLAYED IN HIS FORMER POSITION.

3. IN INTRODUCTORY REMARKS I EXTENDED MY GOVERNMENT'S AND PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS ON HIS APPOINTMENT BUT ALSO MY APPRECIATION OF HEAVY BURDENS WHICH HE HAS VOLUNTEERED TO ASSUME IN ACCEPTING THIS POSITION AT PRESENT TIME. I EXPRESSED VIEW THAT THIS IS A PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT PERIOD IN MODERN HISTORY OF ETHIOPIA AND WISHED HIM EVERY SUCCESS IN EXECUTION OF HIS DIFFICULT RESPONSIBILITIES. I ALSO ASSURED HIM THAT USG DESIRES TO ENJOY A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS GOVERNMENT AND TO ASSIST IT, WITHIN ITS MEANS, IN ANY APPROPRIATE AND PRACTICAL MANNER. SHOULD HIS GOVERNMENT DESIRE ANY CHANGE IN CONTENT OR IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR ONGOING PROGRAMS OF ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE, I HOPED HE WOULD SO INFORM ME.

4. ENDALKACHEW REPLIED THAT OVERALL SITUATION IS NOT YET BACK TO NORMAL BUT THAT HE IS NOW ABLE TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS ON A LESS HECTIC AND MORE RATIONAL BASIS. HE SPOKE WITH SATISFACTION OF THAT DAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING MEMBERSHIP OF CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE (ADDIS 3168) AND CONTINUING WORK OF A TASK FORCE WHICH IS EXAMINING NOT ONLY IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BUT LAYING BASIS FOR MEDIUM-RANGE PROGRAMS (ADDIS 2602).

5. IN FOREIGN RELATIONS FIELD HE INTENDED CONTINUE POSTURE OF NON-ALIGNMENT BUT HE AND HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES VALUE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH WEST, PARTICULARLY US. HE GREATLY APPRECIATED PAST US ASSISTANCE AND REALIZED THAT IN RECENT YEARS THERE HAS BEEN SOME MOVEMENT IN DIRECTION OF ISOLATIONISM IN US. HOWEVER, ETHIOPIA CONTINUES TO NEED US ASSISTANCE VERY MUCH FOR ITS DEFENSE AND DEVELOPMENT. TIMES CHANGE AND A NEW BASIS SHOULD NOW BE FOUND ON WHICH TO "REESTABLISH US-ETHIOPIAN COOPERATION". IN THIS CONNECTION, HE BELIEVED ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT INITIAL TASKS OF HIS GOVERNMENT IS TO SEND FOMIN DR. MINASSIE TO WASHINGTON AT THE HEAD OF A HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION INCLUDING BOTH MILITARY AND ECONOMIC

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ADDIS 03189 221131Z

EXPERTS. HE WOULD APPRECIATE MY INFORMING WASHINGTON TO THIS EFFECT.

6. AT END OF CONVERSATION, I BRIEFLY DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM OF PORT CONGESTION AND ITS GREAT SIGNIFICANCE FOR DROUGHT RELIEF FROM THE US AND OTHER DONOR NATIONS. I EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT TRUCKS SHOULD BE BORROWED FROM THE MILITARY FOR THE PURPOSE OF RELIEVING PORT CONGESTION AND DISTRIBUT-

ING RELIEF SUPPLIES, AND I POINTED OUT THAT MANY NEW TRUCKS PROVIDED BY US HAD JUST ARRIVED. ENDALKACHEW WAS AWARE OF THE PROBLEM BUT APPEARED TO BELIEVE THAT IT DERIVED PRIMARILY FROM THE RECENT TURMOIL AND STRIKE. I POINTED OUT THAT PROBLEM HAD BEEN SERIOUS EVEN BEFORE RECENT TURMOIL AND PREDICTED IT WOULD BECOME ACUTE UNLESS NUMEROUS MILITARY TRUCKS WERE USED. HE MADE NOTE ON SUBJECT AND ASSURED ME HE WOULD GIVE APPROPRIATE INSTRUCTIONS TO BOTH THE RELIEF COORDINATOR AND THE MILITARY AND FOLLOW MATTER CLOSELY. I THANKED HIM AND AGAIN WISHED HIM EVERY SUCCESS IN HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES.

7. COMMENT: IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS VITALLY INTERESTED IN US ASSISTANCE. PROPOSED VISIT OF DELEGATION HEADED BY FONMIN BEARS CLOSE RESEMBLANCE TO PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT'S PLAN FOR VISIT OF DELEGATION HEADED BY PRIME MINISTER (REFTEL. IT WEEMS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN THAT DELEGATION WILL ARGUE FOR A REASSESSMENT OF US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS AND AN INCREASE IN US MILITARY ASSISTANCE BASED ON SUCH RECENT EVENTS AS MIDDLE EAST WAR, OIL CRISIS, INCREASED US NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN, AND PROSPECTIVE OPENING OF SUEZ CANAL. ENDALKACHEW'S REFERENCE TO INCLUSION OF ECONOMIC EXPERTS IN DELEGATION COULD BE RELATED MERELY TO FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE BUT WE SUSPECT THAT DELEGATION WILL ALSO PUSH FOR SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN US ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, POSSIBLY INCLUDING BUDGETARY SUPPORT TO HELP TIDE IEG OVER CURRENT DIFFICULTIES.

8. WHILE FULLY REALIZING THAT PROSPECTS FOR GIVING THIS DELEGATION MUCH SATISFACTION WHEN IT ARRIVES IN WASHINGTON ARE BLEAK, I AM CONVINCED THAT AN EFFORT TO DISSUADE ENDALKACHEW FROM SENDING DELEGATION WOULD NOT BE UNDERSTOOD AND WOULD BE RESENTED. ALTHOUGH PRIME MINISTER DID NOT PROPOSE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ADDIS 03189 221131Z

A SPECIFIC DATE FOR VISIT, HE MAY DO SO IN NEAR FUTURE. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO PREEMPT SUCH MOVE BY SENDING A DATE WHICH I CAN PROPOSE TO PM. IN ANY EVENT, WE BELIEVE AN AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE TO THIS OVERTURE IS DESIRABLE.

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